CHAIN FOOD OUTLETS TO SHOW KILOJOULES BY 2018

Large Victorian chain food outlets and supermarket chains will be required to display kilojoule contents on their menus by 2018, with the Andrews Labor Government today introducing legislation into the Parliament to implement Victoria’s first ever mandatory kilojoule labelling scheme.

Chain food outlets and large supermarket chains are being urged to start planning now with the laws on track to be in force by early 2018.

*The Food (Kilojoule Labelling Scheme and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2016* will require large chain food outlets and large supermarkets to display the kilojoule content of food and drinks on menus, menu boards, price tags and online menus.

The scheme will apply to large chain food businesses that have 20 or more outlets in Victoria or 50 or more outlets nationally and at least one in Victoria – accounting for a total of around 3,000 individual outlets in Victoria.

It will also apply to large supermarket chains, accounting for a further 570 individual outlets in Victoria.

Currently, just over 50 per cent of such Victorian chain food outlets voluntarily display kilojoule content. The remaining 50 per cent now have more than a year to get their new kilojoule menu displays ready.

The Government will help outlets prepare by offering a free kilojoule measuring service for the first year of the scheme, and workshops about how to calculate the kilojoule content of menu items.

Following the announcement of the planned scheme earlier this year, a number of chain food outlets are already taking steps to prepare for the change with outlets such as Ferguson Plarre expected to begin displaying kilojoule content by next year.

Businesses that fail to display kilojoule contents risk fines of up to $3,100 for an individual or $15,500 for a corporation.

About two thirds of Victorians are overweight or obese, and these rates are rapidly rising. It is estimated that obesity, a major risk factor for heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and cancer, costs Victoria $14.4 billion a year.

In New South Wales, an evaluation of kilojoule labelling laws found there was a 15 per cent reduction in the kilojoule content of food purchased by people after the labelling laws took effect.

*Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy*

“Mandatory kilojoule labelling gives families the information they need to make healthier food choices.”

“*Most people dine out more than four times a week, eating energy dense foods such as burgers, chickens, pizzas and pasta, noodles, sushi and bakery items – many are unaware these meals can contain most of an adult’s daily kilojoule intake.*”

“Our new laws are on track to come into effect by 2018, making it easier for people to compare meals and make healthier decisions.”